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built and equipped for the work of deep sea sounding and dredging. The successive officers, Commanders Howell, Sigsbee and Bartlett, especially Commander Sigsbee, have devised the most elaborate and effective machinery for this difficult work, and the present elegant volume gives in great detail the methods and instruments for studying the physics of the sea and for investigating the life of the ocean from the surface to the bottom, even to the abyssal depths; subjects bearing intimately on the physics, geology and biology of the globe. The Superintendent of the Coast Survey, after giving in a prefatory note the history of these undertakings, refers with pride to the fact "that in the small steamer *Blake*, of only 350 tons burthen, n. m., under the energetic and skillful commands of Lieut. Com. Sigsbee and Com. Bartlett, with a full complement of forty-five, including officers and crew, more rapid work was done than had been accomplished with the old methods and appliances by the *Challenger*, a vessel of over 2000 tons burthen, with a complement of twenty-nine naval and civil officers and a correspondingly large crew."

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Akad. der Wissensch. 1. Abth. Juli-Heft. Jahrg. 1880.) pp. 29, 6 plates. From the author.

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Mémoire sur les Poissons Fossiles des lignites de Sieblos. T. C. Winkler, pp. 24, 2 plates.

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GENERAL NOTES.

BOTANY.¹

THE BOTANY OF A CITY SQUARE.—Manhattan Square, in New York city, comprises a desolate and broken area of eighteen acres on the west side of Central Park, at Seventy-seventh street and Eighth avenue. It presented, a year ago, the appearance of a basin with an irregular marginal shelf of higher ground and with a ridge of gneissoid rocks running in from its south-eastern corner, upon whose summit stood the American Museum of Natural History. It was otherwise varied by artificial mounds formed of huge gneiss blocks split and blasted off from the original hill which rose up where the museum now stands, and its sides, in many places presented steep banks formed from similar fragments confusedly heaped up in precipitous and jagged piles. The lowest part of this ground was covered by a stagnant pond whose periodical putrescence became both offensive and dangerous. With the bare shoulders of rock protruding in naked bosses here and there, the general aspect of the square was particularly forlorn and unfortunate. The complaint of the health officers in conjunction with a revival of the original intentions to make this spot an appropriate outlier of Central Park, both healthy and attractive, resulted in some municipal efforts to secure these ends. Earth was carted in, the sightless slopes of stone were covered over, the pond filled up, the bare tables of rock hidden, and an attempt made to change the abrupt and angular outlines into

¹ Edited by PROF. C. E. BESSEY, Ames, Iowa.